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The President's Daily Brief

June 30, 1976

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June 30, 1976

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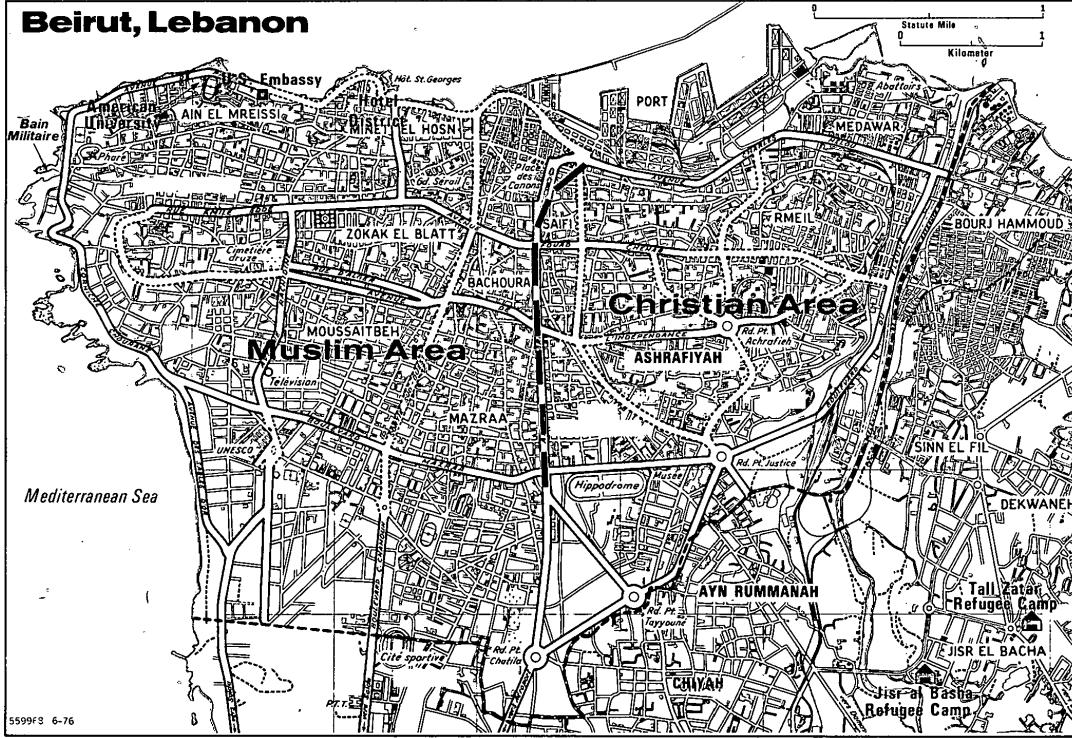
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FOR THE PRESIDENT ONLY

Beirut, Lebanon



LEBANON: Palestinian and leftist forces that were trying to relieve the defenders of Tall Zatar refugee camp were reportedly driven back yesterday. The Christians have taken over Jisr al-Basha camp, and the leftists have begun shelling the Christian captors.

The Arab League foreign ministers meet today in Cairo--at Egypt's instigation--to consider again ways to halt the fighting in Lebanon.

Libyan Prime Minister Jallud, who has been trying to arrange the entry of the league force, yesterday announced the end of his mediation mission.

The battle for Tall Zatar threatens to set off a major confrontation between the Muslim-controlled western sector of the city and Christian-held east Beirut. The US embassy reported yesterday that the area around the embassy and the American University of Beirut is already under increased artillery shelling and mortar fire.

Egypt wants to demonstrate to the other Arab states that Syria is responsible for preventing talks among the Lebanese parties, and that Syria is responsible for hindering the Arab peacekeeping effort.

The Egyptians may succeed in a closed forum in focusing the blame on Syria, and the forum may be able to promote quiet pressure on Damascus to halt the Christian offensive. It is unlikely, however, that the Arab foreign ministers will directly condemn Syria. They will reiterate the need for an Arab security force in Lebanon, but they will probably be unable to remove the obstacles that have so far hindered its formation.

Jallud blamed virtually all the Arab states for the failure of his efforts, and warned that Libya will now give full support to the Palestinian and leftist cause in

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Lebanon. He also announced without explanation that the arrival of Saudi and Sudanese contingents of the pan-Arab force, originally scheduled for today, had been postponed indefinitely.

Although Jallud accomplished little during three weeks of shuttling between Beirut and Damascus, he was the only channel for bargaining among the Syrians, Christians, and Palestinians.

A special Arab League representative and the recently appointed commander of the league security force arrived in Beirut yesterday and apparently will try to resume the work Jallud was doing. Both men, however, are Egyptians with little standing outside the league organization. Neither is expected to have any influence over the Syrians.

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USSR-JORDAN: Some details on the air defense package the Soviet Union offered King Husayn are now available.

According to the chief of Jordan's air force, Moscow has offered Jordan 40 "regiments"--which we presume to be launch batteries--of SA-2, SA-3, and SA-6 surface-to-air missiles, plus 600 shoulder-fired SA-7 missiles and an unknown quantity of ZSU-23/4 self-propelled antiaircraft guns.

Jordan's commander in chief has said that the Soviets have given the Jordanians a reasonable time to consider the offer.

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[redacted] would be trained initially in the USSR and Syria if the deal goes through, after which the Jordanians would assume responsibility for training. In addition, some Soviet advisers and technicians most likely would have to be stationed in Jordan.

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Compared to the 14 batteries of Hawk missiles Jordan was to receive from the US, the Soviet missiles have more firepower--362 launch rails for the Soviet weapons and 252 launch rails for the Hawks-- and offer greater protection at all altitudes. In addition, the SA-6 would give Jordan the mobile battlefield system it has wanted for protecting its troops in combat.

The equipment also would be compatible with Soviet air defense systems provided to other Arab states. This would facilitate coordination on the battlefield and make it easier for Jordan to replenish its stocks during combat.

The Jordanian commander in chief said he still hopes his country's air defense system will be a US and not a Soviet system, but he made clear that Jordan is not interested in any arrangement that includes the British-built Rapier missile system. The general believes that it is now up to the US and not the Saudis to keep Amman from buying from Moscow.

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USSR: General Secretary Brezhnev specifically referred to "proletarian internationalism" in his speech yesterday at the European communist party conference and made clear that Moscow still considers it a relevant concept that should shape relations in the communist world. He made no case, however, for Moscow's primacy.

Brezhnev noted that individual parties were principally responsible to their own working classes, and that relations among the parties should be governed by equality and respect for each other's independence. He said that "no one" had proposed an "organizational center" for the world communist movement.

Although the Soviets have expressed such sentiments before, they will not convince the independents, who will reiterate their own views on interparty relationships.

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Brezhnev made passing swipes at China and Chairman Mao, but made no effort to read the Chinese out of the movement.

He probably wanted to avoid stimulating a defense of the Chinese by any independent-minded party. Moreover, with the prospect of Mao's death very much on their mind, the Soviet leaders may have decided not to push hard on anti-Chinese themes.

In discussing last year's European security conference, Brezhnev argued that the USSR and its allies were doing better than the West in living up to its humanitarian and cultural exchange provisions and that Moscow would insist on its own interpretation of what are appropriate ideas to be exchanged.

Brezhnev was positive on "detente" and said that the parties should help make it "irreversible." Brezhnev indicated that reduced tension had helped promote advances by "progressives" in Europe and setbacks to "fascism" in Portugal, Greece, and Spain. He went out of his way to cite the "outstanding success" of the Italian communists in the recent election.

Brezhnev pledged efforts to improve relations with the US, but expressed irritation with the delay in strategic arms limitation talks caused by "responsible circles" in the US.

He referred to the increase in the US defense budget as evidence of forces working against the relaxation of tension. Although Brezhnev's remarks on SALT were somewhat sharper than heretofore, his overall approach was consistent with his Soviet party congress speeches and subsequent Soviet commentary on a cooling in Soviet-US relations.

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The Aegean Area



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GREECE-TURKEY: Tensions between the two countries are rising again as the Turks prepare to send a seismic research vessel into the contested Aegean Sea.

Turkish officials said last week that the ship, which is now at Istanbul, would enter the Aegean on July 7. Ankara is using the vessel to assert its claim to a share of the potentially mineral-rich seabed and to offset opposition charges that the Demirel government has not vigorously pressed Turkish rights in the Aegean.

Athens will view seriously any Turkish incursions. Last week, for example, the Greeks made a demarche to US officials expressing concern that a Turkish air exercise off Izmir scheduled for July 6 and 7 might be timed to coincide with the ship's activities. Greek Aegean forces reportedly will be in an increased state of readiness when the ship enters contested waters, although they probably will be under orders to avoid a confrontation.

There are indications, meanwhile, that the Turks may choose to make only token thrusts into disputed waters in the hope of minimizing the danger of a Greek reaction. The Turks have assured the US embassy that they do not intend to provoke the Greeks, and that they do not plan to give the vessel a military escort. Nonetheless, it is possible that either side could miscalculate and spark serious trouble.

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NOTE

Last week's riots in Poland present the Hungarian leadership with the difficult decision of whether to implement the price increases on meat products scheduled to take effect tomorrow.

The Hungarian price hikes, which average 33 percent, were announced last November and have since received only occasional public mention. The finance minister indicated last week that planned increases would be put into effect. The leadership may now have second thoughts.

For purely domestic reasons, Budapest may not wish to damage its credibility by retracting a decision that has been on the public record for so long. The economic necessity for such increases is still present, and the measures are mild when compared to the Polish price proposals.

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